

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A unit for feeding capsules [(2)] onto a machine for filling capsules [(2)], the unit comprising:

a hopper [(6)] for containing the capsules [(2)]; the hopper [(6)] having a first axis [(7)] of rotation, being fitted with a number of feed channels [(15)], and rotating continuously about said first axis [(7)] to move said feed channels [(15)] about the first axis [(7)]; and

each feed channel [(15)] having a longitudinal second axis [(14)], and receiving the capsules [(2)] successively from said hopper [(6)]; ~~characterized in that~~

each ~~said~~ feed channel ~~(15)~~ ~~is so~~ being positioned such that ~~the relative~~ said second axis [(14)] forms ~~a given~~ an angle [(a)] of other than 90° with a reference plane [(S1)] perpendicular to said first axis [(7)].

2. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 1, wherein each ~~said~~ feed channel [(15)] is ~~so~~ positioned such that ~~the relative~~ said second axis [(14)] intersects said first axis [(7)].

3. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said feed channels ~~[[15]]~~ are connected to said hopper ~~[[6]]~~ so that said second axes ~~[[14]]~~ are equally spaced about said first axis ~~[[7]]~~.

4. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 1, ~~and also~~ comprising a number of supporting bars ~~[[9]]~~ connected to said hopper ~~[[6]]~~ and each supporting bar having at least two ~~respective of~~ of said feed channels ~~[[15]]~~; each supporting bar ~~[[9]]~~ having a longitudinal plane of symmetry ~~[[S2]]~~ containing said first axis ~~[[7]]~~.

5. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 4, wherein said supporting bars ~~[[9]]~~ are connected to said hopper ~~[[6]]~~ so that said longitudinal planes of symmetry ~~[[S2]]~~ are equally spaced about said first axis ~~[[7]]~~.

6. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 4, wherein the feed channels ~~[[15]]~~ of each ~~said~~ supporting bar ~~[[9]]~~ are positioned with ~~the relative~~ said respective second axes ~~[[14]]~~ substantially parallel to one another and to ~~the relative~~ said longitudinal plane of symmetry ~~[[S2]]~~.

7. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 4, wherein the feed channels ~~[[15]]~~ of each ~~said~~ supporting bar ~~[[9]]~~ are positioned with ~~the relative~~ said respective second axes ~~[[14]]~~ substantially converging with one another towards ~~the relative~~ said longitudinal plane of symmetry ~~[[S2]]~~.

8. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 1, ~~and also~~ comprising a first transfer wheel [(19)] substantially coaxial with said first axis [(7)] and connected to said hopper [(6)] to rotate about the first axis [(7)]; the first wheel [(19)] having a substantially truncated-cone-shaped first outer peripheral surface [(24)], and a number of first seats [(25)] formed in said first surface [(24)], equal in number to said feed channels [(15)], and each ~~for receiving~~ first seat being adapted to receive at least one of said capsule (2) capsules from a relative at least one of said feed channel ~~(15)~~ channels.

9. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 8, ~~and also~~ comprising:
a second transfer wheel ~~(27) which rotates~~ rotatable continuously about a ~~respective~~ third axis [(29)] of rotation substantially parallel to said first axis [(7)]; and
a first transfer station [(32)] connecting said first and said second wheel [(19, 27)] to each other; said second wheel [(27)] having a substantially truncated-cone-shaped second outer peripheral surface [(30)], and a number of second seats [(31)] formed in said second surface, [(30)] and each ~~for receiving~~ second seat being adapted to receive at least one of said capsule (2) capsules from a relative at least one of said first seat ~~(25)~~ seats.

10. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 9, ~~and also~~ comprising:
a third transfer wheel ~~(34) which rotates~~ rotatable continuously about a ~~respective~~ fourth axis [(36)] of rotation substantially parallel to said first and said third axis ~~(7, 29)~~; and

a second transfer station ~~[[40]]~~ connecting said second and said third wheel ~~(27, 34)~~ to each other; said third wheel ~~[[34]]~~ having a number of third seats ~~[[37]]~~ substantially parallel to said fourth axis, and each ~~for receiving~~ third seat being adapted to receive at least one of said capsule ~~(2)~~ capsules from a relative at least one of said second seat ~~(31)~~ seats.

11. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 10, wherein said feed channels ~~[[15]]~~ are connected to said hopper ~~[[6]]~~ so that said second axes ~~[[14]]~~ are equally spaced about said first axis ~~[[7]]~~; said first, second, and third seats ~~(25, 31, 37)~~ being equally spaced ~~with a given spacing~~ about the respective said first, third, and fourth axis ~~(7, 29, 36)~~.

12. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 10, ~~and also~~ comprising a number of supporting bars ~~[[19]]~~ connected to said hopper ~~[[6]]~~, each supporting bar having at least two said feed channels, the supporting bars having ~~(15)~~, ~~and which have~~ respective longitudinal planes of symmetry ~~[[S2]]~~ equally spaced about said first axis ~~[[7]]~~; the feed channels ~~[[15]]~~ of each supporting bar ~~[[9]]~~ being positioned with the relative said second axes ~~[[14]]~~ substantially parallel to one another and to the relative said longitudinal plane of symmetry ~~[[S2]]~~.

13. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 12, wherein the feed channels ~~[[15]]~~ of each supporting bar ~~[[9]]~~ are associated with a relative group of

said first seats [(25)]; the first seats [(25)] in each said group of first seats [(25)] being spaced about said first axis [(7)] with a given first spacing [(p1)].

14. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 13, wherein each pair of adjacent supporting bars [(9)] has a pair of adjacent feed channels [(15)]; each pair of feed channels [(15)] being associated with a pair of said first seats [(25)]; and the first seats [(25)] in each said pair of first seats [(25)] being spaced about said first axis [(7)] with a given second spacing [(p2)].

15. (Currently amended) A unit as claimed in Claim 14, wherein said second seats [(31)] are spaced about said third axis [(29)] with the same spacing as said first seats [(25)], and said third seats [(37)] are equally spaced about said fourth axis [(36)] with a third spacing [(p3)] substantially smaller than said first spacing [(p1)] and substantially greater than said second spacing [(p2)].